

HOW SCROGGS ... WON THE REWARD.

BY L. FRANK BAUM.
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Filling the space between two large building blocks was a little, one-story office. It was flush with the sidewalk, and upon the large window was painted, in red letters,

MR. DICK ROGERS,
CITY BILL POSTER.

"Mr. Dick Rogers" was himself seated behind the window, a big cigar in his mouth, his feet resting upon the confused mass of papers which littered his desk, and his eyes fixed intently upon his morning newspaper.

From amid the stream of passing vehicles a handsome carriage drew up before the door. Mr. Rogers looked over the top of his paper and watched a gentleman step out upon the sidewalk, followed by a servant bearing in his arms a huge package. This the servant placed upon the table, and returned to the carriage.

"I have come once more to employ your services, you see, Mr. Rogers," said the caller, in a quiet, dignified voice.

"Just so," responded the bill poster, with a nod. "So another year is up, eh? Mercy me! how time flies. I'm getting to gauge time by your visits, Mr. Lawrence; let me see—this is the sixth year, ain't it?"

"Yes, this is the sixth year. How many times more I shall be obliged to come to you God only knows. I think I should have already abandoned the attempt were it not for my poor wife's sake."

His voice trembled a little and he turned a rather appealing and deprecating glance upon the unmoved face of Mr. Rogers.

"Never say die, sir," remarked the bill poster, cheerfully. "I s'pose you'd like 'em out right away?"

"If you please."

"Got a boy at liberty right now?" He walked to a rear door, opened it partly and shouted:

"Scroggs!"

"Yes!" answered a clear voice.

"Bag, bucket and brush!" roared Mr. Rogers.

"Right ye are!" came the reply, seemingly from a distant apartment.

Mr. Rogers closed the door and returned to his chair.

"Scroggs'll do the job beautiful," he remarked.

"Are you sure he's reliable?" asked Mr. Lawrence, anxiously. "I am almost afraid to trust this to a mere boy."

"That's Scroggs' strong point—he's reliable. Hain't been with me quite a year, but I'd trust him anywhere."

Never neglects a likely place, and never comes back till the great man one o'clock. I shall always give him your job after this, for I know you'll like his work."

Mr. Lawrence sighed at this intimation of the fruitlessness of his efforts, and the two men sat silently until the door was burst open and a boy of about ten years entered. He wore a bill poster's white jacket and trousers, very much spotted and soiled, a small buttoned cap, and in his hand he bore a canvas bag, a flat paste-board with a brass stick sticking out of the side.

"Here ye are, Dick," he announced.

"Prompt as a biscuit, ain't he?" asked Mr. Rogers, casting an admiring look at his small assistant. "Now, Scroggs, this gentleman is very particular about his work. They're quarter-sheets an' easy handled, an' they're to go in every likely spot you can find."

"Specials, eh?" said Scroggs, as he stood over the package, on the floor and began filling his canvas bag with the sheets.

"Very special, my boy," said Mr. Lawrence, earnestly. "You'll not neglect the work, will you?"

Scroggs straightened up and regarded him with a look of pained surprise.

"D'ye know what they calls me, sir? Why, it's 'Scroggs, the Reliable'! I'm proud of that. When I turn up my toes, sir, I'm a-goin' to have this cut on my tombstone: 'Here lies Scroggs, who never missed a stick'! An' I won't neglect your work, 'cause why? 'Cause it would spite the mother on the tombstone. Them air bills'll go up full count an' all right."

He slung the bag over his shoulder and the paste-board upon his back. Then he bobbed his head at the two gentlemen and passed out the door.

"A strange boy," said Mr. Lawrence, musingly, "and a very young one, for such work. Are not those bills and the paste too heavy for him?"

"Bless ye, no!" replied Mr. Rogers. "Scroggs likes pastin'. He stops so often, you see, he don't mind the weight. It were a lucky day for me when old Scroggs, the blind man, died, an' I got that boy. I'd noticed him leadin' that old man around as keeful as a kitten, an' I says to myself, a kid as'll take that pains with his old dad has good stuff in him—an' he's right. He's sharper'n a chain lightning too."

Mr. Lawrence entered settled his bill and re-entered his carriage. The bill poster re-lighted his cigar and watched the equipage as it rolled away.

"That duck's on a reg'lar wild goose chase," he reflected, "but that's no business o' mine. I expect he'll be a reg'lar customer for years to come."

Meanwhile Scroggs pursued his way up one street and down another, leaving a trail of bills wherever he went. They were odd-looking bills, he noticed, with great black letters at the top and considerable descriptive matter at the bottom. Scroggs could not read; he merely knew when the letters were right side up, but that was quite enough for his purpose. He was quick to see a conspicuous position where a bill could be noticed by the general public, and he never let a good space escape him. Here was one in especial, the broad front of a deserted shop, where the remains of various old bills still fluttered. Scroggs posted three bills in a row upon the front, and then sat down to rest a minute and admire his work.

"They're all 'zactly straight," he murmured, complacently, "an' jest the right distance apart."

Two men, passing by, stopped and read the bills curiously. Then a woman paused to read, and another man, and still another. Several boys loitered

Sick Headache.

"I regard your pills as a godsend to me. I could not make a business engagement without the pills," said a sick headache. "Now my health is excellent, and all thanks to the use of Dr. Deane's Dyspepsia Pills." So wrote W. H. Beveridge, one of Richmond, Va.'s prominent lawyers.

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